

**Summary of the Army Family Action Plan (AFAP)
General Officer Steering Committee (GOSC) Meeting
4 May 2005**

General Richard J. Cody, the Vice Chief of Staff, Army (VCSA), chaired the 4 May 2005 AFAP GOSC meeting to review the progress of 28 AFAP issues. Attendees included Department of Defense (DoD), Department of the Army (DA), and Army Staff principals and representatives from the MACOMs. The following is a summary of the meeting.

Medical/Dental Issues

Issue 488: TRICARE Prime Remote for Family Members Not Residing with Military Sponsor

Proponent: Office of The Surgeon General (OTSG)

AFAP recommendation: Provide TRICARE Prime Remote (TPR) access to all active duty family members who reside in TPR zip code areas.

Briefing:

- The FY01 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) authorized TPR for Active Duty Family Members (ADFMs) who “reside with” sponsors in TPR zip code areas.
- The FY03 NDAA permits TPR-enrolled ADFMs to remain enrolled in TPR while the sponsor serves on an unaccompanied tour if the family remains in the same zip code area. It also gives family members of activated Reserve Component (RC) members on orders for over 30 days TPR eligibility if they reside in a TPR zip code area with their RC sponsor at the time of activation.
- Several attempts to obtain legislative relief from the “resides with” clause have been unsuccessful.
- Families who are not authorized TPR are still eligible to enroll in TRICARE Standard.
- Approximately 50,000 geographically dispersed military family members are eligible, but not enrolled in TPR. Of these, approximately 14,000 are Army family members.

VCSA comment: The VCSA discussed the funding challenges associated with the health care budget. Additionally, the changing footprint of the Army will result in increased construction costs to build/expand hospitals and clinics. Stressing the importance of this issue, he maintained that emphasis at this time needs to be on maintaining the best quality health care we can provide and taking care of our retirees.

Resolution: Issue remains active.

Issue 490: Annual Vision Readiness Screening

Proponent: OTSG

AFAP recommendations: Require annual vision readiness screening for all Soldiers (Active, Guard, and Reserve). Fund required follow-up exams. Fund and issue military eyewear when necessary.

Briefing:

- The Army, G-1 and The Surgeon General (TSG) approved a Vision Readiness (VR) Deployment Requirements Checklist and a VR Classification System. The checklist is on the Web for Army-wide utilization.

- In 1st Qtr FY05, TSG fielded policy requiring annual VR screenings Army-wide (Active Duty (AD) and Reserve Components (RC)).
- The US Army Medical Command funds/issues eyewear for AD members. The Federal Strategic Health Alliance provides eye examinations for deploying RC Soldiers, and the RC funds military eye wear for Reserve Soldiers during Soldier Readiness Processing (SRP).

Resolution: Issue was declared completed.

Issue 505: Regional Portability of TRICARE Boundaries

Proponent: OTSG

AFAP recommendations: Reduce the number of TRICARE regions. Allow beneficiaries to access routine and specialized medical care in other regions.

Briefing:

- The TRICARE Management Activity replaced the previous 11 CONUS contracts with 3 new 5-year contracts in Aug 03. The “by-Region” transition to the new contracts was completed on schedule on 01 Nov 04.
- The enrollment option, TRICARE Prime, requires managed care notifications/authorizations for care outside the region for care continuity, claims and cost accounting reasons.

Resolution: Issue was declared completed.

Issue 517: Availability of TRICARE Authorized and Network Providers in Remote Areas

Proponent: OTSG

AFAP recommendation: Increase TRICARE reimbursements to competitive rates as an incentive to recruit and retain medical care providers in remote areas.

Briefing:

- By law, TRICARE reimbursement rates are indexed to Medicare reimbursement rates.
- As of 01 Sep 04, TRICARE accepts as TRICARE providers all that accept Medicare. However, providers limit the percentage of TRICARE and Medicare patients they treat because of the low reimbursement rate.
- The TRICARE Management Activity (TMA) authorizes higher reimbursement rates in areas that have provider access problems. Increased rates have been implemented in areas where the medical community is small and the demand for medical care is high. Other initiatives to improve reimbursement include bonus payments to certain primary care/specialty providers.
- The FY04 NDAA requires DoD to achieve and maintain adequate provider participation in TRICARE Standard. TMA is surveying providers to identify reasons for lack of participation in TRICARE.

Resolution: Issue remains active.

Issue 533: Timeliness of Dental Pre-Authorizations

Proponent: OTSG

AFAP recommendations: Require the Military Medical Support Office (MMSO) to authorize dental treatment, deny treatment, or request additional information within 7 days of receipt. Send the response to the provider, Soldier and Beneficiary Counseling

Assistance Coordinator (BCAC) via phone/fax/e-mail. Increase MMSO staffing for internal quality control to improve efficiency in processing claims and pre-authorizations.

Briefing:

- MMSO has reduced processing time for 95% of initial pre-authorizations to 5 days and meets/exceeds both the 21-day preauthorization and 30-day claims processing standards.
- MMSO meets Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requirements for phone/fax/e-fax transfer of data and information. Because many dentists do not have capacity yet to securely transmit data and information, MMSO is working a contract to ensure HIPAA compliance as data is transferred to MMSO.
- MMSO added a new automation system and expanded its staff to 2 military dentists, 2 dental technicians, and 3 civilians.

Resolution: Issue was declared completed.

Issue 570: Expiration of TRICARE Referral Authorizations

Proponent: OTSG

AFAP recommendation: Eliminate the automatic expiration of the initial TRICARE referral authorization.

Briefing:

- Referral authorizations are automatically closed if a beneficiary is not given a specialty appointment within the 28-day standard.
- TMA has agreed to use a unique systems' identifier on each referral for tracking purposes. Referrals that would administratively close because they exceed the access to care standard of 28 days will be identified and the status will be verified and acted on before the referral is closed.
- The electronic referral and authorization process that was to be implemented under the new TRICARE region contracts has not been enacted because of software problems.

Resolution: Issue remains active.

Issue 572: Family Member Eyeglass Coverage

Proponent: OTSG

AFAP recommendations: Fund a portion of the cost of eyeglasses under TRICARE. Outsource eyeglass fabrication through contracted vendors at a reduced price. Provide Frame of Choice Program at cost from the military lab.

Briefing:

- Eyeglasses are not a benefit under TRICARE. Army, TSG is forwarding to the TMA a request for a legislative proposal for a DoD TRICARE Active Duty/retiree family member eyeglass benefit.
- OTSG is working with the Army Air Force Exchange System (AAFES)/other entities to assess outsourcing options for providing family member eyeglasses at reduced prices under TRICARE/in the direct care system.
- OTSG looked at the feasibility of obtaining glasses from the Optical Fabrication Laboratory inside the Department of Defense since they are more cost efficient than outsourcing eyeglass production. However, there is no excess capacity at this time to produce eyeglasses for family members.

VCSA comment: Based on a VCSA question, OTSG will see if any cost avoidance can be shifted from the reduced cost of eyewear as a result of more Soldiers having laser eye surgery.

Resolution: Issue remains active.

Issue 579: Pregnancy Termination Option for Lethal Congenital Anomalies

Proponent: OTSG

AFAP recommendations: Provide TRICARE coverage for pregnancy termination when lethal congenital anomalies exist.

Briefing: The concept of terminating pregnancies, for whatever reason, is an extremely emotional and political issue. Use of DoD funds for abortions, except to save the mother's life, is forbidden by U.S. law/statute.

Resolution: Issue was deemed unattainable.

Entitlements Issues

Issue 442: Soldier Financial Hardship Due to Duty Away from Military Installation

Proponent: Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1

AFAP recommendation: Monetarily compensate Soldiers for additional expenses incurred due to the lack of access to military facilities based on their geographic location.

Briefing:

- The VCSA tasked G-1 to define requirements. A tiger team met in Sep 02 and concluded that much has been done to alleviate financial hardship associated with duty away from a military installation. Among these are pay and entitlements benefits such as ongoing pay raises, increases in Basic Allowance for Housing, and programs such as TRICARE Prime Remote. Other improvements for this demographic group include more efficient processing of authorizations for military personnel to receive civilian dental care and initiatives to contract for child care facilities and fitness centers.
- Commanders have used work-arounds, such as training holidays, to allow Soldiers and families to drive to a nearby installation for exchange, commissary, military treatment facility, etc.

Discussion:

- The Sergeant Major of the Army (SMA) noted that recruiters receive \$450 per month for recruiting duty, and Soldiers in Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) assignments do not. In particular, he referenced the need for commanders to contract for use of fitness facilities. Accessions Command noted that they are working with college administrators for access to fitness centers.
- The Chief of Army Reserves stated that new Reserve Centers have full sets of Nautilus equipment and that there's no reason the facilities cannot be used by active component Soldiers. He expressed concern that there is not enough information sharing, and commented that information sharing will be even more important as base realignment and closure (BRAC) takes effect.

Resolution: Issue was determined to be completed.

Issue 451: Continental United States (CONUS) Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) Threshold Index

Proponent: Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1

AFAP recommendation: Lower the CONUS COLA threshold index to 107%.

Briefing:

- Unified Legislative and Budget (ULB) proposals to lower CONUS COLA threshold from 108% to 107% were unsuccessful in FY02 and FY05.
- When non-housing related costs go up in an area beyond 108% of the average cost of living in the continental United States (the CONUS COLA threshold), COLA increases approximately \$25 per percentage point.

Resolution: Issue was deemed unattainable.

Issue 528: Retirement Dislocation Allowance (DLA)

Proponent: Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1

AFAP recommendation: Authorize and fund DLA for retiring service members.

Briefing: The other Services, Joint Staff and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) Comptroller did not support a legislative initiative to provide DLA to retirees citing significant cost (\$20M/year) with no return on the investment.

VCSA comment: The VCSA concurred that, given the cost of other initiatives to take care of service members and their families, the time is not right for this issue.

Resolution: Issue was deemed unattainable.

Issue 538: Death Benefits for Stillborn Infants

Proponent: Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1

AFAP recommendation: Change the Family Supplemental Group Life Insurance (FSGLI) to include a death benefit for stillborn infant(s).

Briefing:

- The bottom line on this issue is that there is no death certificate for stillbirths, and a death certificate is necessary for insurance payment.
- A memorandum (16 Jun 04) signed by Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs to Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness requested assistance and forwarding of AFAP concern to Veterans Affairs (VA). Office of the Secretary of Defense (16 Dec 04) would not forward memo to VA.

Discussion: Following discussion between OTSG and G-1 about the issuance of death certificates for stillbirths over 20 weeks, TSG said that his office would examine this further.

Resolution: Issue remains active. The G-1 will coordinate with OTSG regarding death certificates for stillbirths.

Issue 554: Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) and Social Security Offset

Proponent: Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1

AFAP recommendation: Delay the start of the second tier level of SBP benefits from age 62 to 72 at no additional cost to the participants. Increase the second tier level of benefits from 35% to 40% of the military member's retirement pay at no additional cost to the participants.

Briefing: The FY05 NDAA makes SBP a level-tiered, 55% benefit plan. Benefits (currently 35% of retired pay for post age-62 annuitants) will increase over 3.5 years as follows: 1 Oct 05: 40%; 1 Apr 06: 45%; 1 Apr 07: 50%; 1 Apr 08: 55%. A one-year open enrollment period will be held, 1 Oct 05-30 Sep 06. This legislation provides improvements that exceed the AFAP recommendations.

Resolution: Issue was determined to be completed.

Issue 564: Calculation of Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance (FSSA)

Proponent: Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1

AFAP recommendation: Eliminate housing allowances from income calculations for FSSA.

Briefing:

- The food stamp program does not require on-post housing to be counted as income. As a result, a Soldier living on-post may be eligible for food stamps while a Soldier in the same identical situation off-post is not. When Congress created FSSA legislation, they required the value of on post housing to be counted as income. This calculation eliminates the variance seen with food stamps and levels playing field between off post and on post Soldiers.
- The OSD and the sister Services do not concur with the AFAP recommendation. A recommendation will go to Per Diem Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee (PDTATAC) seeking average Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA) rate for the purpose of FSSA calculation.
- Currently, about 18 E-1 pay grade Soldiers draw an average of \$158/month. The majority of Soldiers who qualify for FSSA are E-4s; approximately 182 draw an average of \$198/month. No E-7, 8, or 9s or officers are drawing FSSA.

Resolution: Issue remains active.

Counseling Issue

Issue 574: Funding for RC Reunion and Marriage Enrichment Classes

Proponent: Army National Guard (ARNG) and US Army Reserve (USAR)

AFAP recommendation: Fund the Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP) for the ARNG and USAR.

Briefing:

- The ARNG and USAR, like the active component, is principally a married Army. Marriage enrichment is helpful post-deployment to improve communications with the family.
- The ARNG and USAR have funded marriage enrichment internally. FY06 funding (\$12M for the USAR/\$21.6M for the ARNG) are unresourced requirements. These requirements were part of the supplemental request, but did not make the cut line.

VCSA direction: The VCSA said that that in the near term we cannot forget that we've got a far-term issue in terms of the health of the force. He asked the Director of the Army Budget to find out why this initiative fell off the \$57B supplemental spreadsheet.

Resolution: Issue remains active.

Force Support Issues

Issue 548: Housing for Active Duty Pregnant Single Soldiers

Proponent: Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1

AFAP recommendation: Allow unmarried pregnant service members to move into on-post housing in the third trimester of pregnancy.

Briefing:

- Current policy allows local commanders authority to approve exceptions to waiting list policies under special circumstances such as extreme hardship, compassionate, or medical reasons. The other Services and Army staff elements non-concurred because the recommendation would provide "blanket authorization" for housing.
- In Feb 05, Headquarters Installation Management Agency sent a memo to the field to reinforce policy guidance and reiterate the installation commander's authority and flexibility. A comprehensive review of permanent files and telephone inquiries revealed no complaints or inquiries from the field regarding unfair treatment or inconsistent policy regarding subject issue.

Resolution: Issue was determined to be completed.

Issue 549: Lodging and Subsistence for Family Members of Hospitalized Service Members

Proponent: Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1

AFAP recommendation: Provide travel and transportation allowance (per diem) to families of all Soldiers hospitalized with serious illness or injury; allow extensions on a case by case basis.

Briefing:

- Title 37, United States Code, section 411h previously allowed family travel for two family members of a seriously ill (SI) or injured Soldier, but did not include per diem. Public Law 108-11, dated 16 Apr 03, expanded 37 USC 411h to allow per diem for the family members.
- The FY05 NDAA amended 37 USC 411h to allow travel and transportation allowances (lodging and subsistence per diem) for family members of very seriously injured (VSI)/SI hospitalized Soldiers not injured as a result of duty in a contingency operation.

Resolution: Issue was determined to be completed.

Issue 575: Leave Accrual

Proponent: Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1

AFAP recommendation: Allow Soldiers to accumulate 90 days leave until termination of service.

Briefing:

- Soldiers currently are authorized to accrue up to 120 days of leave when they are deployed in theater. In accordance with recent DoD Directive, service members use the first leave accrued. This allows a Soldier who has been deployed to carry forward up to 120 days for three years and reduces the likelihood that Soldiers will lose accrued leave.
- Legislation to allow 90 days Special Leave Accrual (SLA) at the Secretary's discretion received unanimous approval from other Services and was forwarded to Congress as a ULB item.

Discussion:

- FY03 and 04 statistics indicate that the average median lost leave was around 4.5 days; in FY04 and FY05 it climbed to 5.5 days.
- Attendees discussed the pros and cons of allowing Soldiers to accrue more leave and identification of circumstance that allowed leave to accumulate. The SMA noted that some units have less than 12 months between deployments and others, when they come back from deployment, are being reduced 40-50% to populate TRADOC and Accessions

Command. The SMA expressed further concern that it was mid-grade/senior NCOs and officers who are losing leave, not younger Soldiers.

- GOSC members suggested that G-1 explore an extension of the time period that leave can be carried forward from 3 years to 5 years and allow Soldiers to sell back leave in excess of 60 days if they cannot use it.

VCSA direction: The VCSA directed G-1 to work with G-3 to operationalize this concern because Soldiers in units with back to back deployments are probably not able to take the leave they are entitled.

Resolution: Issue remains active.

Issue 496: Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) Status

Notification

Proponent: Chief Information Officer, G-6

AFAP recommendations: Provide Commanders the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) extract report monthly. Implement monthly reminders to check DEERS status on Soldier's Leave and Earnings Statement (LES), in order to identify any changes in current status. Develop a web-based system linked to Army Knowledge On-line (AKO) where soldiers can check their DEERS status.

Briefing:

- Providing the DEERS status report to commanders is not feasible because of time delays in receiving the report.
- Soldier's LES now have quarterly reminders reminding Soldiers to check their DEERS status.
- Effective 7 Mar 05, Soldiers and family members can check their DEERS data through AKO. Inquiries made through AKO to DEERS are at approximately 2,700 hits per day.

Discussion: The G-6 representative clarified that active and reserve Soldiers can access DEERS information through their AKO account.

Resolution: Issue was determined to be completed.

Relocation Issue

Issue 307: Inferior Shipment of Household Goods

Proponent: Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC)

AFAP recommendation: Establish local databases on contractor performance and claims process to determine the best value movers. Award contracts to the best value movers based upon their comparative costs that include low bid and claims history. Provide full replacement value for lost or damaged household goods.

Briefing:

- SDDC developed the new personal property program called Families First, which includes an automated information system, the Defense Personal Property System (DPS).
- To date two of the three challenges remaining were resolved.
 - Language was introduced in House Report 108-491 directing the Secretary to reevaluate the estimated 13% cost increase. SDDC revalidated its program costs and confirmed that cost would be contained within 13% of the current program, and forwarded this report through the services to OSD, to the Hill.

- Language introduced in HR4200, Section 1065, directing the Secretary not to implement Families First beyond Phase I until a report is submitted to Congress whether Phase I met its objectives, was also successfully appealed.
- DPS rollout is on track. SDDC held briefings with Services and Industry to outline functionality and process changes and prepare stakeholders for this new Web-based program. The most significant changes include the ability to initiate counseling, submit surveys and file claims on-line. Completion of online surveys will be critical to ensure that service members receive quality service. Using this data the SDDC team will promulgate a higher quality move program and obtain quality service providers; therefore service member will receive benefits far greater than full replacement value.
- Key to the challenges remaining is the funding of this program; specifically a \$105M cost increase for the Army. To provide service members the quality of the shipments and movement of their household goods that they deserve, the increased program cost must be funded.

VCSA comments:

- In response to a question from the VCSA about computation of the \$105M cost estimate, SDDC responded that the costs were based on FY04 figures.
- Questions were raised about mildew in household goods of Soldiers in the 2nd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division (Korea). G-4 responded that inspections indicate that the mildew was caused by wet uniforms, duffle bags and equipment in the shipments and stated that the contractor was at fault for allowing packaging of wet items. The VCSA stressed the importance of reimbursing these Soldiers quickly.

Discussion: The Office of the Judge Advocate General stated that they are developing an on-line claims reporting and processing system.

Resolution: The issue remains active.

Issue 454: Execution of Sponsorship Program

Proponent: US Army Community and Family Support Center (USACFSC)

AFAP recommendations: Mandate addition of sponsorship training to mission task list. Implement the monitoring and evaluation requirements in AR 600-8-8 (The Total Army Sponsorship Program) and report findings to higher headquarters. Require a trained sponsorship pool at the unit or installation level to respond to programmed and unprogrammed arrivals.

Briefing:

- Per Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3, it is inappropriate to list Army Community Service (ACS) training requirements on mission essential task list.
- Revision to AR 600-8-8, paragraph 1-4 (The Total Army Sponsorship Program) has put the requirement to monitor and evaluate sponsorship programs in the Organizational Inspection Program.
- Revision to AR 600-8-8 requires commanders to have a trained sponsorship pool at unit or installation level to respond to programmed and unprogrammed arrivals. Europe and Korea have implemented automated sponsorship programs.

Resolution: Issue was determined to be completed.

Civilian Employment Issue

Issue 530: Selective Use of Military Spouse Preference (MSP)

Proponent: Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, Civilian Personnel

AFAP recommendations: Allow military spouses to apply for any nonappropriated fund (NAF) or appropriated fund (APF) position without invoking MSP. Authorize military spouses to select the specific grade levels and job series for which they want to invoke their MSP.

Briefing:

- On 7 Oct 04, OSD authorized a permanent change to DoDI 1404.12 and immediate implementation of a modified MSP Choice DoD-wide. The policy allows spouses to accept temporary, term, time-limited, intermittent or flexible employment with U.S. Forces and retain their MSP eligibility for permanent positions of primary personal interest to them.
- In addition to expanding parameters for invoking MSP, military spouses have gained an increased sense of control over their job placements and career advancement.

Resolution: The AFAP issue was determined to be completed.

Family Support Issue

Issue 480: Family Sponsorship During Unaccompanied Tours

Proponent: USACFSC

AFAP recommendation: Assign sponsorship of waiting families to the garrison chain of command. Require the Military Personnel Service Center to notify ACS and the Garrison Commander of waiting families in the area. In Nov 03, this issue was broadened to provide assistance to geographically dispersed waiting families.

Briefing:

- ACS is the best agency on the Garrison staff to assist waiting families.
- AR 608-1, ACS, revised Aug 03, requires support services for families residing on post, in surrounding communities, or living separately from military and/or civilian sponsor due to mission requirements. Services include: needs assessments, referral, support groups, crisis intervention and liaison with military/civilian agencies. ACS requests addresses of waiting families when Soldiers attend overseas orientation – scheduled by military personnel division/personnel service battalion.
- Outreach to geographically dispersed waiting families
 - Information and referral provided via Army One Source (1-800-464-8107), Military OneSource (1-800-342-9647)/www.armyonesource.com.
 - Army G-1 information line (1-800-833-6622 or www.wblo.org) is also available for those who have exhausted other resources.
 - Web-based services on www.myarmylifetoo.com, the ACS website, assist connections for waiting families.

VCSA comment: The VCSA said that when people think of “unaccompanied tours”, it’s no longer just Korea – it’s also Afghanistan, Iraq and other locations. The VCSA said to establish a test base to see what’s working and what’s not. Suggestion was made to use Fort Carson as a test base. Following a comment about the importance of customer relations, the VCSA said that strategic communication will be increasingly important as the Army announces rebasing decisions.

Resolution: Issue remains active.

Child and Youth Issues

Issue 513: Lack of Child Care for Geographically Isolated Active Duty Soldiers

Proponent: USACFSC

AFAP recommendation: Locate and subsidize care spaces in local community child care programs for use by geographically isolated active duty Soldiers who do not have access to military child care systems on installations.

Briefing:

- DoD/ USACFSC funded a Business Initiative Council (BIC) Pilot (*Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood*) for 2,000 geographically dispersed active duty Soldiers. This initiative reduces the Soldier's price for off-post child care. Child & Youth Outreach Specialists (USACFSC assets) have been placed in Accessions Command, ARNG, and USAR headquarters to facilitate Soldier access to quality affordable child care. Additionally 216 General Services Administration (GSA) centers are included in Army/GSA Memorandum of Agreement to provide additional child spaces for Soldiers, and more than 500 private sector programs are expected to participate.
- The POM 06-11 includes validated (but unfunded) requirements for 7,000 Army Sponsored Community Based Child Care spaces (includes continuation of BIC Pilot spaces). This requirement does not take into account increased spaces that may be needed with the repositioning of Soldiers and families back to CONUS.

VCSA comment: The VCSA inquired about the funding for *Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood* under the 90-90 funding. The Director of the Army Budget responded that the requirement was identified but not funded. The VCSA said we need to take a look at it. The Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management (ACSIM) said that this issue was high on the list for funding. (Note: If 90-90 funding is received, these spaces will be funded.)

Discussion:

- The SMA noted that in Feb 05 testimony before the House Appropriations Committee for quality of life, the senior enlisted advisors from all the Services said that child care was the number one issue when they talked about quality of life.
- USACFSC explained that the total off-post requirement is about 15,000 spaces, but noted that many of those spaces are currently funded and, if the money follows those programs with repositioning, USACFSC will shift that money over to the contract.
- USACFSC clarified that "Operation Military Child Care" has 6,000 child spaces for activated/deployed Guard and Reserve that are currently funded out of Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) dollars. Included are spaces for geographically-dispersed deployed Active component military unable to access child care on military installations.
- USACFSC clarified that *Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood* provides child care spaces to serve geographically dispersed Active Soldiers serving in independent assignments and those located within the garrison catchment area unable to access on-post child care. [Management Decision Package (MDEP) funding]

Resolution: Issue remains active.

Issue 569: Expansion of Army Sponsored Community Based Child Care Program (ASCBCP)

Proponent: USACFSC

AFAP recommendation: Increase the number of ASCBCP subsidized child care spaces to meet 80% of those who lack affordable and available child care.

Briefing:

- Community based child care is a key strategy in meeting the DoD Social Compact goal to increase child care to 80% of the demand. In addition to the child care spaces to serve geographically dispersed families (*Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood*), Army is looking to lower out-of-pocket child care expenses for 2800 ASCBCP spaces for families living in garrison catchment areas that are unable to access on-post child care.
- USACFSC requested funding in FY07-11 Program Budget Review for the 9800 child spaces (7000 for geographically dispersed Soldiers and 2800 for garrison Soldiers). This initiative is supported by Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Board of Directors (Feb 05) as a viable expansion option to augment Army operated child care on garrisons. ASCBCP will reduce the number of military construction (MILCON) on-post child care centers from 35 to 26.

Resolution: Issue remains active.

Issue 566: Child Care Fee Categories

Proponent: USACFSC

AFAP recommendation: Increase the number of child care fee categories to reduce the financial variance. Increase the number of fee ranges with new fee categories while maintaining the existing fee range parameters.

Briefing:

- Because fee categories are the same across all services, DoD concurrence is required. A proposal to increase the number of Soldier/family income categories and “even out” fee child care fee ranges has been sent to DoD for review.
- A cost benefit analysis is underway to determine financial impact on Army Child and Youth Services (CYS) program and patrons.

Resolution: Issue remains active.

Issue 478: DoD Dependents School System (DoDDS) Tuition for Family Members of DoD Contractors and NAF Employees

Proponent: Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA)

AFAP recommendation: Provide space-available, tuition-free education to the family members of non-sponsored, full-time NAF employees and DoD contractors.

Briefing:

- Dependents of U.S. Government full-time, locally hired APF and NAF employees are currently authorized enrollment in DoDDS on a space-available, tuition free basis. A legislative proposal to change enrollment to space-required is now in Congressional committees.
- Upon passage of legislation to expand enrollment status for locally hired APF and NAF employees, DoDDS will initiate action to move dependents of U.S. Government contractors from a space-available, tuition-paying status to space-required, tuition-paying.

Discussion:

- Question surfaced about the status of overseas children whose parent is mobilized. OSD responded that the General Counsel has authorized continued enrollment based on the permanent civilian employment status of a mobilized reservist. OSD continues to work enrollment eligibility of children of contractors (Federal and corporate) who are mobilized.
- Because of potential increase in special education services provided by the military medical department, coordination of this initiative with the medical system was requested.

Resolution: Issue remains active.

Issue 573: Funding for DoDDS Summer School for Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade (K-12)

Proponent: DoDEA

AFAP recommendations: Provide DoDDS students the opportunity to attend summer school tuition free. Funding should come at the willingness of the Services to assist in securing or providing resources to make summer school a permanent part of DoDDS.

Briefing:

- DoDEA's request for FY05 Emergency Supplemental Funds for a K-8 summer program was not supported, but the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel & Readiness) provided one-time funding for summer 2005. Approximately 71 sites will have four-week programs this summer. DoDEA will assess the benefits of the program at the end of summer 05.
- DoDEA will expand the tutorial remedial courses offered last summer to 300 online spaces in English, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science for students in grades 9-12.

VCSA comment: The VCSA asked about the Army's ability to provide funding if it appears that this initiative would help in the transition to the Army's new footprint. The DUSD (MC&FP) responded that the mechanisms are in place for the Services to share other costs. The VCSA asked that this issue remain active and said that he'd like to understand it more as the Army begins to restation Soldiers and families.

Resolution: Issue remains active.

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